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SUBJECT: EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY: INTEGRATION, FEDERATION,
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SUMMARY

1. (U) The East African Community (EAC) is ready to formally accept two new members, Burundi and Rwanda, at the upcoming EAC summit in Kampala on June 18. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have concluded the consultative process on political federation and a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the USG is being reviewed and considered at the working level by EAC officials. The EAC is still awaiting ratification of the Protocol on the Environment and Natural Resources Management, which was initially endorsed in April 2006. End summary.

Trade and Investment Framework Agreement

2. (SBU) EAC officials have referred the USG draft of a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to the EAC Legal Department, according to Dr. Caleb Weggboro, Head of Sectoral Policies and Programs at the East African Community Secretariat. Uledi Mussa, Director of Infrastructure in the

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Ministry of East African Cooperation, also confirmed to EconOff June 4 that the EAC has the TIFA under consideration and review. Weggboro noted that since the EAC officials and lawyers are still reviewing the TIFA language, if the EAC were to announce that it was considering entering into a TIFA, officials would need to be prepared to answer questions on the subject, implying they were not yet ready to do so.

3. (SBU) EconOff emphasized that USTR and Embassy officials were ready to discuss the TIFA with EAC officials to answer questions or concerns at the earliest convenient time, either in person or via a conference call. Weggboro told EconOff that such consultations could help assure that a TIFA would be "half and half;" that is, include elements that came from the EAC as well as from the USG. Weggboro added that, along with a TIFA, the EAC is "considering other avenues," including Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the European Union which hosted a conference in Nairobi on the subject at the end of May 2007.

New Members

¶4. (U) Weggoro confirmed that the preparations for the two new EAC members are nearly complete; Rwanda and Burundi are expected to sign accession treaties at the June 18 EAC summit in Kampala, to become effective July 1. Thereafter, Rwanda and Burundi will select their representatives to the East African Legislative Assembly and the East African Community Court of Justice. Dr. Weggoro stressed that after July 1, the work begins afresh as the systems of Rwanda and Burundi are "very different" from those of the founding members of the EAC. Regarding the language of the EAC, Weggoro said Rwanda has embraced English; although Burundi has said it also will accept English, in fact, Burundians do not use English in practice. Therefore, the EAC will have to use French in addition to English "at least for a while," said Weggoro.

Regional Economic Community Integration

¶5. (U) Officials from the African regional economic communities (RECs) held their quarterly meeting on Zanzibar on May 28 and 29. Key topics under discussion were the integration of the RECs and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Weggoro confirmed it is understood among officials of the regional economic communities including SADC, COMESA and the EAC, that there eventually would be one African Economic Community down the road, noting that the African Union's charter states the RECs are building blocks of the Union.

Political Federation

¶6. (SBU) Reports on the consultative process regarding political federation of the EAC are expected to be presented at the EAC heads of state summit on June 18 and an

announcement may follow regarding the political federation. In Weggoro's view, political federation is a foregone conclusion and only the timing is the real issue. Weggoro said that the National Committees for the Consultative Process on the East African Political Federation had erred by framing the issue as whether or not to establish a political federation. He believed the more accurate question should have been: how and when to create such a federation.

¶7. (SBU) Elvis Musiba, President of the Tanzanian Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCCIA), told PolCouns June 3 that he served for three months on the national committee that polled Tanzanian citizens' views on the political federation of the EAC. His team was sent to many rural regions of Tanzania and to the city of Mwanza. Musiba said the opinions he heard overall indicated that about 70 per cent of the Tanzanians polled were in favor of political federation with the remainder against or held no opinion. However, of those in favor, 80 percent stressed there was no need to "fast track" the political federation: let it develop "in time." The remaining 20 percent expressed the view: "the sooner the better" to create an EAC political federation.

Environment Protocol

¶8. (U) The EAC is the first regional economic community in Africa to develop a Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources Management. Signed on April 3, 2006, the member states have yet to ratify the protocol. However, the national management authorities who participated in its drafting do not consider the fact the Protocol has not been ratified to date as opposition or dissatisfaction with the objectives and substance of the document. Under the Protocol, national resource management authorities are tasked to monitor activities in their country on behalf of the EAC and to share information with other member states.

Comment

19. (SBU) Dr. Flora Musonda, the EAC Director of Trade, confirmed to the Embassy June 11 that the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the USG is not on the agenda to be discussed at the upcoming June 18 summit meeting. While the memberships of Burundi and Rwanda and how to practically integrate them into the EAC appear to be the top agenda items for the Kampala meeting, post will continue to press EAC officials to consult with USTR or the Embassy to answer any questions or concerns about the implementation of a TIFA.
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